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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 004781

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/23/2015

TAGS: PHUM PREL PGOV KDEM EG

SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL PRESENTS REPORT TO MUBARAK;  
HINTS AT INTEREST IN ELECTION MONITORING

REF: A. CAIRO 4170

1B. CAIRO 2876

Classified By: ECPO Counselor John Desrocher for reasons  
1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (SBU) Summary: On June 21, National Council for Human Rights (NCHR) president Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali met with President Mubarak to formally present the Council's first annual report, which had been publicly released in mid-April (ref B). Following the meeting, Boutros Ghali announced that the Council is willing to form a "solidarity" committee on the presidential elections. Separately, Hafez Abou Se'ada, Secretary General of the Egyptian Organization of Human

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Rights (EOHR) and chairman of NCHR's Complaints Commission, has outlined an ambitious plan by a group of 19 NGOs to monitor this fall's presidential and parliamentary elections. End summary.

12. (SBU) NCHR President Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the former U.N. Secretary General, delivered the Council's first annual report to President Mubarak during a June 21 meeting; however, the President's office has not yet offered an official reaction. (Note: The NCHR, a quasi-independent body operationalized by the GOE in 2004, had transmitted the report to the GOE in April, but the GOE to date has not commented on the report. End note.)

13. (C) Following the meeting, Boutros-Ghali announced that the Council is willing to form a "solidarity" committee on the elections. Media critics characterized the comment as "vague," wondering if the proposed committee would show "solidarity" with the GOE or the opposition. According to EOHR SG Hafez Abou Se'ada, who is also chair of NCHR's Complaints Commission, there is an ongoing struggle within the Council on this issue, with pro-GOE members in favor of only accepting complaints (rather than monitoring or observing the polls) and the more independent members calling for the full monitoring of the electoral process.

14. (C) Separately, Abou Se'ada recently announced the formation of an "Elections Observatory" coalition, a group of 19 NGOs working together to monitor all stages of the electoral process. The Observatory's goals, according to its charter, are to: "provide an independent, unbiased and objective assessment of the elections; encourage participation in order to build the voter trust in the election process; ensure the integrity of the election process; and contribute to rectifying and developing the election process in the future based on the lessons learned." According to Hafez, the agreement struck between all 19 NGOs has been for each organization to consolidate separate reports on the electoral process into one report to be prepared by a consultative body of public figures and a general secretariat. (Note: An EOHR staffer working on the "Elections Observatory" coalition project told Poloff on June 22 that the coalition was "fragile" and that the 19 NGOs differed among themselves on key issues such as accepting foreign funding or working with international monitors. This contact also reported that the coalition NGOs had yet to agree on common monitoring procedures, principles, or methodologies. End note.)

15. (SBU) Comment: We are encouraged by the evolving domestic interest in monitoring, observing, or otherwise assessing the upcoming elections. In addition to the "Elections Observatory" coalition and the NCHR, which is a quasi-governmental body, we are aware of at least two other coalitions of civil society groups preparing to conduct monitoring activities (ref A). We will continue to track all of these efforts. End comment.

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